

## **Forest Health Strategy Work Group**

June 29, 2006: First Meeting  
Natural Resource Building, Room 461  
1111 Washington Street SE  
Olympia, Washington

### **Members Present:**

Pat McElroy, Chair, DNR Staff  
Margaret Barrette, Coordinator, DNR Staff  
Karen Ripley, DNR Staff  
Mike Blankenship, Ferry County Commissioner  
Peter Heide, Washington State Society of American Foresters (WSAF)  
Maurice Williamson, Small Forest Landowner Advisory Committee  
Rick Brazell, USDA Forest Service  
Rich Fonda, Fire Ecologist, WWU  
Bruce Lippke, UW College of Forest Resources  
Bob Gara, Forest Entomologist, UW College of Forest Resources  
David Whipple, Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife

### **Absent:**

Mike Petersen, The Lands Council  
Barry Moore, WSU Dept. of Natural Resource Science  
John St. Pierre, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation

### **Guests:**

Elaine Oneil, UW College of Forest Resources  
Karl Denison, USDA Forest Service  
Jason Callahan, House Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee (HANRC)  
Curt Gavigan, Senate - Natural Resources, Ocean and Recreation  
Marshall Taylor, Washington State Department of Ecology (DOE)  
Miguel Perez-Gibson, Washington State National Audubon Conservation Committee (WSACC)

### **CALL TO ORDER:**

Pat McElroy called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. Introductions were made. Emergency procedures were gone over.

### **BACKGROUND**

McElroy talked about the report that was published in December 2004, "A Desirable Forest Health Program for Washington's Forest"; which was submitted to the Commissioner of Public Lands, Doug Sutherland and the Legislature on December 30, 2004. At that same time Commissioner Sutherland presented, "Washington State Strategic Plan for Healthy Forests". The report listed the Work Group's recommendations, and asked Legislature to extend the Work Group for one year so they could hold workshops across the State in 2005; to inform landowners, communities, public officials, and the general public of the Work Group's findings and recommendations. The Work Group would then take public comments and input, and provide the Legislature with a summary of the issues that had been identified in

the public process; and propose a Forest Health Bill for 2006. The 2005 Bill to extend the Work Group for one year, did not pass.

In 2006, Engrossed Senate Bill 5179 reauthorizing the Work Group directing the Work Group to hold public meetings across the State to get the perspective of the public. Budget Appropriation passed. DNR can pay travel expenses for Work Group members who need support.

### **Role of Work Group**

- As available, it's beneficial to attend public meetings.
- Once we have the information from the public, we need to get together in the fall to rework into Legislative proposal.
- Need information on current conditions
  - Bark beetles are thriving
  - Westside trees turning red and dying
  - High west spruce budworm on the east slopes of the Cascades
- Fire Strategic Plan indicates the connection between forest health and fire. It is important to recognize that fuels are a symptom. Forest health is the issue.
- Fuels can be measured, forest health can't. Fuels correlate with forest health...link to it.
- In future forest studies, the University of Washington will look at forest health as part of this study and could produce preliminary findings. Mortality trend is very fast.
- Renewal of Portfolio Standards
  - PUDs have to produce a certain percentage of energy from renewables. We didn't consider that in our report. Need to offer biomass, or it will all go to wind power.
- Draft legislation to be reformatted, reordered by A.G., for 2<sup>nd</sup> draft of Bill. It will be a template to work from.
- Members in room believe in this, do all constituents? **Strategy: Take time to hear from the public.**
- Be sure Work Group describes what was considered when telling public what we decided (Do some of that here first)

Ripley informed the Group that the Fire Suppression Program took the recommendations from the Work Group and included it in the Fire Strategic Plan. (See Handout)

Ferry County has 70,000 acres of privately owned lands in Colville's Reservation.

The Growth Management Act (GMA) has a connection to forest health. Counties are required to protect forestland. Small tracts and large tracts of land lock people into position. If it's onerous to stay in a timber classification, it may discourage marginal timber owners from staying in the timber business. Do we want to investigate unforeseen consequences?

### **REVIEWED DOCUMENTS (Handouts)**

The Work Group went over the "Forest Health Strategy Work Group Reports, for 2004", "Hulsey Paper", and the "Draft Legislation". There was a group discussion of issues.

Key questions for constituents:

1. What is needed for landowners to make a go of this?
2. Is regulatory system necessary?
3. To what extent should regulation be used?

1 McElroy suggested as a proposal to use the DNR to edit public comment, rather than the Group editing.  
2 He talked about the three tiers built into the legislation.

3  
4 Williamson commented that we may have omitted GMA. Tax classification as a hammer may conflict  
5 with counties requirements to protect forestlands.

6  
7 Blankenship advised looking at the ten acre issue. Seeing smaller parcels that fit into timber categories  
8 but are not being managed; which could impact forest health. These are parcels that get attention during  
9 fires.

10  
11 McElroy pointed out he was seeing unintended consequences and issues that were not considered in  
12 previous Bill proposal.

13  
14 Fonda asked if there had been a School Fire Report. What happened? Are there any lessons to share for  
15 forest health, or smoke management?

16  
17 McElroy said he would look into getting pictures of the School Fire.

18  
19 Blankenship reported Community Wildfire Protection Plans (CWPP) are being written for a few counties;  
20 as part of fuels treatment planning. These tools will seek Forest Service assistance in protecting those  
21 structures/communities.

22  
23 Separate this work from I-933 property rights. Avoid being a rallying point for I-933. (If it makes the  
24 ballot)

25  
26 McElroy advised to talk about what we already do and can do.

27  
28 Williamson suggested considering Biometrician assist in risk analysis and assessment. It would be  
29 helpful in long term forest/fish buffers.

30  
31 Lippke stated that forest service studies exclude stand replacement regime areas from forest health issues.

32  
33 Brazell remarked that it's an eastside/westside tiff, 50 percent of the federal budget is in fire or fuels. The  
34 westside is starting to squawk! Starting in 2007, there will be a "Strategic Budgeting Process".

## 35 36 **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

37 There was a discussion about the locations. It was decided to change Marysville to Mt. Vernon, and to  
38 add another meeting to the agenda, which would take place in SeaTac. See the update below.

### 39 40 **Proposed Dates and Locations** (See handout, for locations and addresses)

41	14-Aug-06	6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Longview
42	15-Aug-06	2:00 PM to 4:30 PM	Aberdeen
43	16-Aug-06	6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Yakima
44	24-Aug-06	2:00 PM to 4:30 PM	Walla Walla
45	28-Aug-06	6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Colville
46	29-Aug-06	2:00 PM to 4:30 PM	Omak
47	30-Aug-06	6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	Mt. Vernon
48	31-Aug-06	6:30 PM to 9:00 PM	SeaTac

## 49 50 **FORMAT of MEETING**

- 51 • Presentation about forest health issues. What DNR is doing, local issues, and Q&A

- Presentation regarding legislation and Work Group report, and Q&A
- Solicit public comment
- We will take comments at meetings and via Website
- McElroy's PowerPoint Presentation from two years ago; allow 15 minutes for questions
- Breakout groups may be used and require note taker in every group

#### **MEETING MATERIALS**

- Provide background and education on forest health issues
- Visuals are a key
- Have executive summary recommendations available and receiving list at every meeting
- Have a review of recommendations in Work Group Report

#### **MEETING ANNOUNCEMENT and BACKGROUND (Website)**

- Make information available to different organizations
- Ask members to work with others to encourage attendance
- Educate before the meeting (There is a database of 70 Small Landowners), (WFFA, WFPA, Forest Practice Board)
- Provide executive summary to mailing list (Keep on Website)
- Add information regarding problem/background (Keep on Website)
- Communicate with constituencies, those who would benefit from hearing, and whom should be heard
- Lay out scope of public meeting (Keep on Website)
- Ask Work Group members for affiliation
- Must have pictures of bulleted items on page 8 of Recommendations
- Press Release
- Opportunity/Education piece for newspaper with photos and statewide map
- Education Partners = Tom Robinson - Timber Company Communities, Steve Gibbs – WSU, NIFFLS, Absentee Eastside landowners, and Loren Torgerson – Forest Health Goal Implementation Team

#### **ACTION ITEMS:**

**Action:** Vicki will schedule a meeting in Mt. Vernon and SeaTac, then E-mail the updated Meeting Schedule to Work Group members.

**Action:** Vicki will update member list, then E-mail the updated list to Work Group members.

**Action:** McElroy will look for pictures of School Fire

**Action:** Ripley will produce small illustration of high levels of tree mortality

**Action:** Ask members which meetings they can attend

**Action:** Margaret will work with DNR Communication Group to develop outreach materials, including putting the Work Group meeting minutes, and public dates of meetings on the Web.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.